



U.S. Department of State Career Transition Center

CTC NEWSLETTER

(Print Version)

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Happy Holidays!

*"Well there's more than
one way home
ain't no right way,
ain't no wrong,
and whatever road you
might be on,
you find your own way
'cause there's more than
one way home."*

*- Written by K. Moore and
J.L. Parker, Sung by Keb'
Mo'*

Job Search Professionals—Part Two

—Prepared by the CTC Staff

In the last edition of the Newsletter, we defined and discussed career coaches, career counselors, recruiters, and headhunters. Now we will attempt to address the important question, "Is there anyone out there that I can hire to represent me and my interests and find me a job?"

That question started a long and frustrating search through the Internet, the yellow pages, the newspaper, and our network of contacts in the "industry." We were looking for a professional person or company who could take up where the career coaches and counselors might leave off, someone



the job searcher could employ like an actor's talent agent.

Our first clue that this service might not really exist was linguistic. There doesn't seem to be one term for the service — like talent agent. Here are some of the names we ran across in our search:

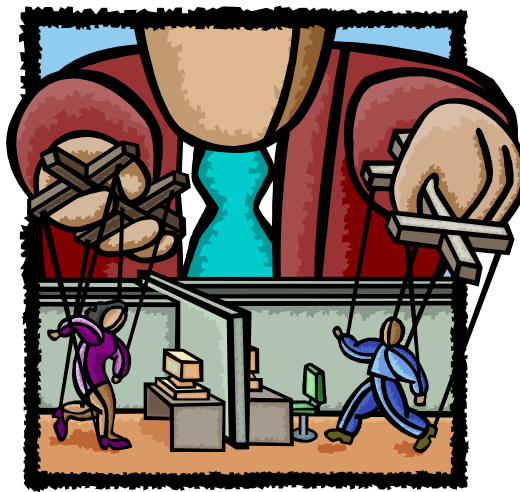
- permanent placement service
- career placement service

- staffing company
- employment agency
- career specialist
- executive search specialist
- outplacement firm
- retail or consumer outplacement firm
- advance fee firm
- career management company
- executive management consulting firm
- career consultant
- career marketing
- search firm

These names all sounded promising and we investigated each one, but, reading the fine print on their websites and advertisements, we soon discovered that they generally fell into the categories of recruiter, headhunter, career coach, or career counselor.

For want of a better term, let's call these possible talent agents "career marketers." Some work only in one industry, such as information technology, others handle all types of professionals. Unlike career counseling and coaching services, most of the career marketing services we found in our search were offered by companies, not individuals, and it appears to be a largely unregulated "industry" -- Clue Number Two. We did find the International Association of Career Consulting Firms (www.iaccf.com) that sets forth some standards for the industry.

ers may refer you to their corporate customers for a job, thereby providing services to both that company and you -- charging you both and dividing their loyalties. Sometimes this is done by allowing you to list your resume -- for a fee, of course - on their website which is accessible only to their corporate customers.



Career Marketing Services

Like a career counselor, some career marketing companies offer assessments of your skills and preferences. Like a career counselor or coach, some will help you revise your resume and hone your interview skills. Like a counselor or coach, some will instruct you where and how to look for a job in your chosen field. Like a counselor or coach, some will help you devise a job search plan. Like some recruiting companies, the career market-

Some use third party job listing databases -- which may be available to you for free on your home computer.

In addition to the services traditionally associated with counseling, coaching, and even recruiting, the career marketing companies may offer you clerical support

"The world is full of willing people, some willing to work, the rest willing to let them."

- Robert Frost

and stamps in addition to office space, telephones, fax machines, and Internet terminals. Others may offer research on the companies you are targeting.

How Career Marketers Recruit

Some career marketing firms will even call you!

They may get your name and number off the resumes you posted on the Internet (a scary topic for another article!), then call you with a slick sales pitch. Some advertise their close, personal relationships with the movers and shakers in your profession, offering to mail introductory letters for you to these contacts. Some claim access to unpublished, unlisted, unadvertised job vacancies.

Some promise a weekly meeting in which they will provide you with a certain number of job leads, but tailoring those leads to your personal search criteria (location, salary, etc.) may not be one of their priorities. Sound too good to be true? Clue Number Three.

Some career marketers claim to be very exclusive and interview you to make sure you are good enough for them. This is a legitimate tactic when they need to make sure you really do

have a Professional Engineering license in that state or that you are a senior executive earning a 6-digit salary. Unfortunately, there are some companies that use the tactic as a sales technique. Many of the articles we read on this phenomena joked that the company's review usually took only long enough for your check or credit card to clear!

Another tactic used by the more disreputable career marketers is to place job announcements in newspaper and professional publications. When you respond and go to the interview, thinking you are applying for a specific position, they lead you to believe they are recruiters, tell you that job has been filled, but you would be perfect for other jobs they are handling. You just need to spruce up your resume, practice your interview skills, etc., etc. Watch out for these silver-tongued devils! The literature we've been reading says the red warning flags are too much flattery and too much criticism.



How Career Marketers Get Paid

Most career marketing companies target executives with high salaries and provide minimal, if any, services to mid-level professionals like most of us. They can certainly earn much larger fees from a person earning \$500,000 plus than they can from a humble ex-government employee! And, in their new jobs, the executives will have the power to hire more of the career marketer's cli-

"A happy life is one which is in accord with its own nature."

- Seneca

ents. Please note that NONE of the services they offer are free! And their fees are usually not listed in their advertisements and websites.

Unlike the career counselors and coaches who charge hourly fees, they often require payment or, at least, a down payment, in advance. Some career marketer advertisements specifically state that the company is not an "employment agency" because in some states, employment agencies are not allowed to take payment for services in advance. Clue Number Four.

Their fees vary dramatically from a few thousand to

many thousand dollars. Sometimes they base their fee on your last salary. No matter how much you pay, the services you receive may be the same.

A few of the less reputable career marketing firms will assure you that their rather daunting fees will probably be refunded to you or paid by the employer they find for you. Some declare that there will be no charge at all if they fail to find you a job – but, again, beware of the fine print!

Summary

If you detect a note of cynicism here, you are right! Reading fine print will do that to you! Most of these companies offer legitimate and useful job search services. They will not, however, pound the pavement for you. This research has only reaffirmed our belief that you are really the only one out there looking out for you!

So, we will end this article with the same words of advice we gave you last month. Before dealing with any job search professional or company, read their advertisements and offers very, very carefully. Be especially careful before signing a contract that may cost a lot for very little in return. Don't rush and don't let the

company or individual pressure you. This is your career and deserves your time and attention.

Here are some more tips on protecting yourself from the less honest job search professionals:

1. Read their advertisements and contracts carefully and ask lots of questions about the services advertised. Especially scrutinize the money back guarantees – many are payable only if you have filed certain progress reports or filled out several forms. Look for loopholes!

2. Get everything in writing – make sure all those promises are on paper and clearly defined. If they guarantee job placement, make sure it's not at the Wal*Mart front door!

3. Ask them where they find their job leads. You have access to Monster.com and will not be impressed if that is their source, too. If they are promising interviews with CEOs of big name corporations and access to a hidden job market, ask for proof. Beware a pig in a poke!

4. Ask for references and actually check them out.

We read about one company whose references worked for them!

5. Research the company with a search engine like "google." Make sure the company has been in busi-



ness for at least 2 years under the same management. Also check the company with some good consumer advocacy resources like your local Better Business Bureau (www.bbb.org), www.ripoffreport.com and sites such as www.jobscams.com (which even has a "Hall of Shame!"), The Riley Guide (www.rileyguide.com), and Executive Career Management (www.execcareer.com).

6. Talk with the company's staff and check their cre-

"Your imagination is your preview of life's coming attractions."

- Albert Einstein

dentials. Sometimes you will be interviewed by the smooth talking sales staff, then find – after you've written the check -- that the company's counselors have been working with the local high school vocational program, not seasoned big city professionals like you. Also find out how much time your counselor(s) will actually spend with you, how big is his/her/their caseload, and what has been his/her/their success rate.

7. If you post your resume on an internet site, be very careful. If you can avoid including your physical address and telephone numbers, do so. Include only an e-mail address on the resume and make it a special address just for this purpose. (Stay tuned for future discussion of posting resumes on the internet.)

Now here's a slick little ad for the CTC: Before employing the services of a job search (career marketing!) professional, review the materials you received in the Job Search Program. You may find that we have already given you – for free! -- the same tools and guidelines they advertise for a fee. The CTC staffers — Bill Owen, Nedra Klee Hartzell, and Amy Pitts — are also

available to talk with you in person, by e-mail, or by telephone, if you would like to consult with us about the job search industry.

EDITOR'S NOTE



We hope you have found the article above helpful. Traditionally, we have reprinted articles from outside experts on job search topics. We are now planning to write several feature articles for future editions of this newsletter. We intend to target questions that we are frequently asked by you, our clients. So, if you have any suggestions for topics, please let us know. We want to be responsive to your needs and would appreciate your input.

Also, if you would like to write an article for the newsletter, we would certainly consider publishing it. We are especially interested in articles about your personal experiences in job searches and about finding a new career direction. Humorous accounts are very welcome!

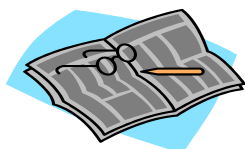
Best wishes for a safe and very happy holiday season!



*"But I was so much older then,
I'm younger than that now."*

- Bob Dylan, "My Back Pages"

JOB LEADS



Here is a list of upcoming job fairs in the DC area. We find most of these job fair announcements in *The Washington Post's* Sunday "Jobs" section. But Washington, D.C. is not the center of the universe, so, if you are interested in job fairs in the DC area and other locations in the beautiful United States of America, here are a few other sources for job fair information:

Brass Ring, Inc. - www.brassring.com
Career Fairs - www.careerfairs.com
Intelligence Careers - www.intelligencecareers.com/careerfairs/
Expo Experts - www.newspaperjobfairs.com
HotJobs Career Expo - www.hotjobs.com/events/
JobFairUSA - www.jobfairusa.com
PICKDiversity.com - www.pickdiversity.com/

Corporate Gray Job Fair
December 5, 2003
To be held at NVCC Annandale Campus
Approximately 95 companies
For more info: www.CorporateGray.com or call 703-690-6381

BearingPoint Hiring Invitational
December 6, 2003
To be held in McLean, VA
For more info and to register:
www.bearingpoint.com

Targeted Job Fair

December 9, 2003
To be held at the BWI Hol.Inn
For more info: www.mantech.com/employment/MT_career_fair2.htm

Security Clearance EXPO
Wednesday, December 10, 2003
To be held at Tysons Corner Marriott
For more info: www.SecurityClearanceEXPO.com

Defense Systems & Information
Intelligence Careers - Virginia
Defense Careers
December 18, 2003
To be held in Herndon, VA
For more info: www.intelligencecareers.com/careerfairs

ATTENTION JSP GRADUATES!



Follow-up Meetings:
The last JSP follow-up

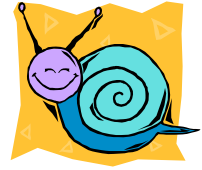
meeting of 2003 will be held in Room E-2118 at NFATC (FSI) on December 9th. Join Program participants for networking, exchanging ideas, sharing experiences, and re-charging your job search batteries!

Job Fair: The next CTC Job Fair will be held on March 23, 2004.

The Newsletter: The Newsletter is also available on FSI's page on the State Department Intranet.

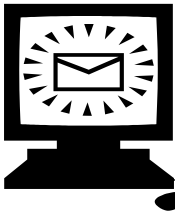
GET THE NEWSLETTER ONLINE!

You can receive the CTC Newsletter much faster by e-mail than by snail mail! Added benefits are receiving the job leads, sparing innocent trees from destruction, and saving a few dollars for the U.S. taxpayer.



If you have an e-mail address, please let us know! Send your e-mail address to pittsa@state.gov and we will send the newsletter to you via e-mail every month. Please note that we will delete your e-mail address after receiving 5 "undeliverable" messages for that address.

As we have more than 450 clients on our distribution list now, the editor lists your addresses in the "blind copy" option in her messages so you won't have several pages of addressees on your end. Also note that we send all newsletters and all job leads to all of you -- we cannot select out just the ECON officers or just those interested in working in the DC area — but we do try to note the area of interest on the subject line so that you can quickly delete the message if it is not of interest to you.



So, join us in cyberspace and save time, trees, and tax dollars!



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